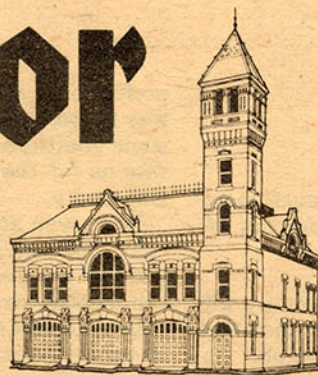


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Ann Arbor



Observer

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

FEBRUARY, 1977



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Ann Arbor's Biggest Problems—Seven Opinions

It's easy to lose perspective about the really major problems facing Ann Arbor, given the many controversies that flare up in the city month after month. Issues such as where to place a new bus transfer point, whether to permit a senior citizen's highrise to be built near Briarwood, or how much to subsidize the airport are hardly unimportant issues. But the amount of attention they get can obscure other, more fundamental problems facing the city in the coming years.

What are these major problems facing Ann Arbor in the next few years? We asked that question of seven people who have been actively involved in city government long enough to have gained some perspective in the matter. Here is how they responded:

Louis Belcher

Lou Belcher is a city council member from the Fifth Ward and Republican candidate for mayor.

First of all, I see a long-range solid waste disposal plan that absolutely needs to be done—hopefully by energy conversion. I also see on a long-term basis a 15-year program for fixing up our streets a little bit at a time. I also think we are going to be faced with insuring that our tax base remains in the city of Ann Arbor by preventing the traditional flight to the suburbs. I'm very concerned with the overall quality of life that attracts so many types of people to Ann Arbor. I hope we can maintain the cosmopolitan flavor that makes it a desirable place to work and live. Insuring that our central core city doesn't deteriorate is a problem; we have to maintain a strong central city.

As for the "flight to the suburbs," what's causing this to be a potential problem is that our tax rate has gone up, up, up. Even more than that, the price of housing in Ann Arbor has gone up significantly. To give you an example, a brand new house in my area sold for \$32,000 in 1962 and now sells for \$62,000. We're pricing people out of the market. We've either gone with very high-priced houses in Ann Arbor lately or with low-cost housing. I think we've hit both extremes very well, maybe in some cases too well. And we've really not addressed ourselves to the type of housing someone in the so-called middle class can afford. They don't fit in low cost housing and they can't afford the \$55,000-\$65,000 homes that most single family homes are going for in Ann Arbor now. The lowest priced home you can get in Ann Arbor right now is somewhere around \$35,000.

Robert Henry

Robert Henry, Republican council member from the Third Ward, is serving his second term.

There are two major problems we will continue facing: one is money, the other is the overall downtown situation.

The crux of the money problem is: How do we finance services the people want? People want more services and don't want to pay for them. It has always been my position that at some point we have to say no and draw some lines. When we don't do that, we start getting into some big trouble. Over the years, I don't

prefer not to see, or with a change in the way property taxes are assessed, or with some additional state funds to compensate us for the services we provide the University.

When you analyze the problem of the city's finances, you've only got two ways you can go: you can cut services or you can increase revenues. It's probably got to be a mixture of both. Citizens will have to expect fewer services. On the other hand, citizens still need to have their garbage picked up, their streets maintained, police and fire protection, and so forth. There are certain minimum levels of service you have to provide.

I think the biggest problem associated with downtown is that it cannot remain static. People would like for it to remain

static, but it cannot do that. It either has to grow, or it decays, and I think that's true of almost anything.

lated from their neighbors. And when you've got mainly rich and poor, you get a lot of resentment, a lot of clashing of ideologies, a lot of stereotyping both ways, and nobody's in the middle to act as a bridge.

When you lose the middle class, you lose a tax base in a very real sense. When the middle class moved out of New York, a lot of the tax base went with it. The very rich still had their places to stay. But the very poor couldn't afford the houses being vacated, so a lot of places went off the tax rolls. The other thing that happens is that what was once a struggling but decent neighborhood—a neighborhood where people aren't rich, but they're keeping up their lawns, etc.—those houses are abandoned and turned into rooming houses.

The whole housing problem is the basic problem. And if we can't straighten housing out, we're going to have a whole lot of problems. For example if you have a low density population where the rich tend to live and a high density poor population in other areas, you can't support public transportation very well. And when you have a dwindling tax base, the people who remain have to bear the extra burden.

Jamie Kenworthy

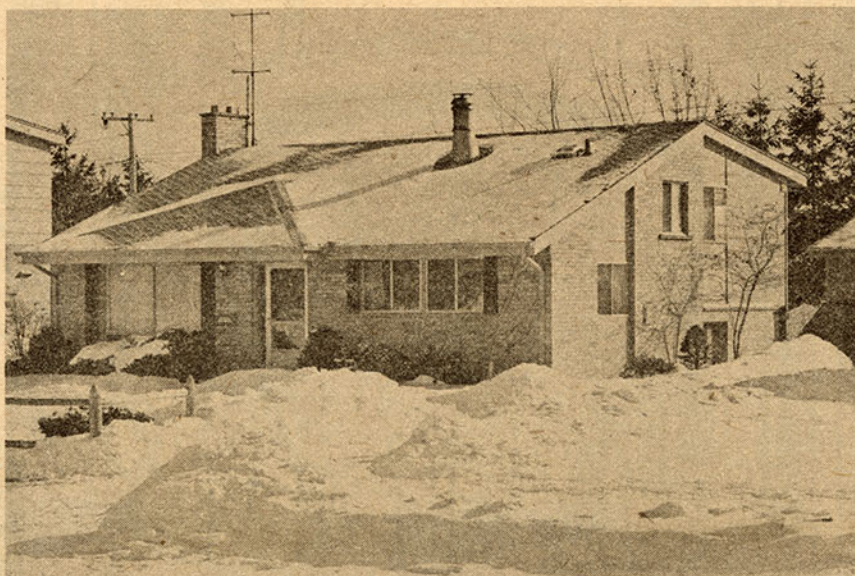
Jamie Kenworthy, a Democratic council member from the Fourth Ward, is serving his second term.

I see several basic problem areas. First, how to get low and moderate cost housing in the central city. How do you subsidize that? With high land and construction costs, we need federal subsidies. I think we're getting to an age where we're more dependent on state and federal money, where hopefully we'll have a clearer picture of its availability. Up to now, they've changed the rules and the dollar amounts every six months.

Secondly, the whole service delivery problem. At this point, I suspect that the salaries of city employees are rising faster than the city's tax rolls. That says to me that if our labor costs are rising faster than our assessments, then unless we get a lot more outside help, or get more efficient, it's tough even to maintain present levels of services.

Third, we could easily spend \$10 million on the roads in our area. We have an awful road problem. And we have nowhere near the needed resources to pay for those repairs. The answer has to be federal money, or it's not going to happen at all.

Finally, we need to find the money to rebuild our public housing sites. I can think of no clearer responsibility and no clearer disgrace in our city than the run-down condition of our public housing.



Photos by Dave Breen

This house on Avondale, which sold for \$22,900 in 1964, sold in 1976 for \$45,000. The doubling of house prices, typical in the Ann Arbor area, has two problematic effects: [1] it has meant a comparable increase in property taxes, making many Ann Arborites feel their local taxes are too high; [2] the high cost of Ann Arbor homes is pricing many middle income families out of the Ann Arbor housing market.

believe that property taxes have kept up with inflation, and I think primarily that's because of the wages of city employees. With the union settlements that have had to be made, and with fringe benefits going up as much as they have, the city's cost of operation has risen faster than the normal increases in property values which provide our increase in city revenues.

Ultimately we're going to have to wind up with some kind of tax reform or another, either with some kind of municipal income tax, which I really would

static, but it cannot do that. It either has to grow, or it decays, and I think that's true of almost anything.

Elizabeth Keogh

Liz Keogh is a Democratic council member from the First Ward, and a former county commissioner.

The biggest problem I see is that a lot of people who might otherwise buy houses in Ann Arbor say, 'Screw it, I ain't paying these taxes.' The result is that you're starting to see in Ann Arbor what's already happening in other cities: it's being left to the very rich and the very poor. And the middle class is fleeing to Dexter, Milan, Chelsea, and so on.

This is related to housing, which is also a problem, a very big problem. And the cost of housing is related to taxes and utilities, and all that stuff. We know that people are not building apartment houses the way they used to. And the houses being built are no longer the \$30,000 types, but more like \$75,000. You've got a real problem when you've got both extremes of the spectrum mashed together and nothing in the middle—just rich and poor.

Ann Arbor needs to keep a middle class. It's the middle class folks who tend to be the folks who support cultural affairs, community activities. Very wealthy people tend to be socially iso-

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Guy Larcom

Guy Larcom was city administrator of Ann Arbor from 1956 to 1973. He is now the director of Ann Arbor Tomorrow.

I don't foresee any really serious problems facing the city in the sense of major problems now found in the urban areas of Detroit or the close-in suburbs of Boston. Nor do I think that problems in the near future will compare to the ones the city had during the civil rights and student disturbances in the late sixties. Or indeed the problems of growth and expansion in the late fifties.

The real problem for the city as I foresee it is along these lines: it would be a failure or inability for the city to achieve the potential that it really has, because Ann Arbor is a city with great advantages. Basically the problems with sewage treatment, waste disposal, traffic, streets, downtown development, and so on, can all be handled in terms of today's technology and a will to do them. But the question is not the capacity to do them, but whether Ann Arbor mobilizes to these tasks.

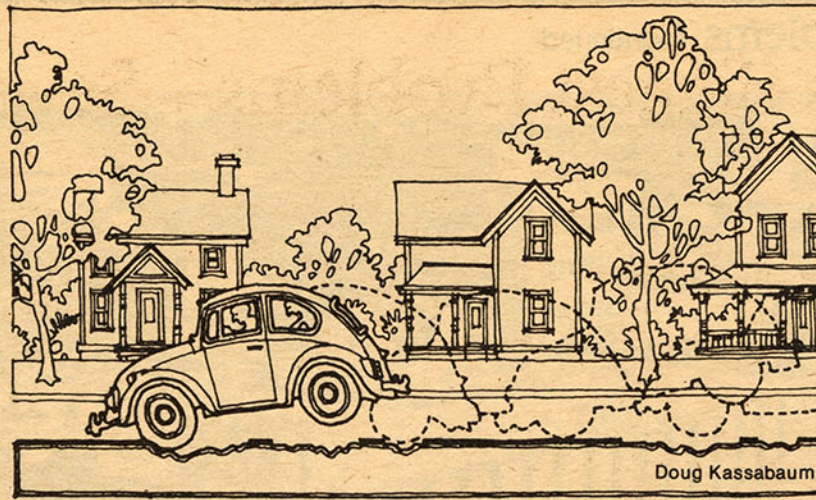
Essentially the approach now taken to all the challenges facing the city is negative. If you look at the platforms and statements of elected officials, if you look at the programs of many of the leading citizen groups, it's clear that their goal is to *prevent*: they want less street development, no changes in the airport, no new real estate development or commercial development. No growth, period.

Essentially, the pro-no-growth people are concerned about protecting and improving our environment. What is missing is a positive position, where, as it was true in other years, there were major goals, major spending programs: bond programs for parks, roads, public facilities, recreational facilities, senior citizens, the whole gamut.

As for major specific problem areas, one is in financing city projects and operation. There are rigid controls on tax revenue sources where the city needs them the most. Money is available for a variety of city activities, but the general fund, which pays for police, fire-fighting, courts, and other key, gutsy services, is seriously circumscribed—much more so than in other cities. We have a lower property tax limitation to fund city services than almost any other city in Michigan. We allow ourselves only 7½ mills to fund city services.

In addition, other cities have a joint property tax-income tax. We basically can't, because our charter says if you have a city income tax, you must wipe out most of the property tax for operating purposes. And as city employee wages increase—and their unions are extremely strong—the city will be in a bind again. Finding enough money to provide basic city services is going to be a serious problem.

Another basic problem is providing housing for poor and middle income peo-



One of the most visible and expensive problems facing Ann Arbor is the roads. There are about 225 miles of roads in Ann Arbor, and city administrator Sylvester Murray says about half that amount need improving, costing up to half a million dollars a mile. The cost of substantially improving Ann Arbor roads is far more than Ann Arbor citizens are likely to tax themselves.

ple. There have been some sporadic private and city efforts in this area, but there is no coordinated program to encourage construction of more housing in the low and middle income area. And in fact the city's approach is usually so negative on private housing that it tends to discourage rather than encourage it. What is needed is a kind of top housing expert in the city who knows all the H.U.D. ways of financing, state ways of financing, and ties together public and private housing with some government subsidies.

In the downtown area, things are holding up pretty well, but I think there's a failure to have a city commitment to public facilities of all types and kinds—a civic center, streetscape improvements, promenades, little parks, and other people-oriented things. In the long run, we've let our downtown become second rate. Ann Arbor is one of the few cities I know where the elected officials don't consider support in the form of capital investment for downtown as a major political goal.

The third area is a tougher one, and it's keyed off by the fact that the county has recently released a plan made by their planning department for the county area. I think achieving some form of metropolitan planning and distribution of key facilities like sewer lines and the development of roads in the entire area is going to be a key problem in the sense that Ann Arbor citizens think in terms of protecting and preserving their own environment. But we really have no control over the environment just outside the city limits. And we don't have a big city area; 23 square miles is small. Somehow the city and the townships—all are equally parochial—all have to have some kind of a plan, some coordinated approach. They need some amount of agreement on land use density, and they also need to agree on the distribution of facilities—sewer and water, solid waste disposal and roads.

Sylvester Murray

Sylvester Murray has been Ann Arbor's city administrator since 1973.

One of our problems is going to be to maintain and enhance our physical environment. I think that because of what we can expect of the economy, we can expect that buildings in the city center area will be torn down and others put up on the same land. One problem will be

ensuring that the rebuilding does not change the character of the town negatively.

We are going to have a problem moving people—a problem with transportation, within five years' time. If you come down our streets now at eight in the morning or five in the afternoon, you find a traffic jam, probably around 15 minutes in length. So for those 15 minutes, you really have a hard way to go. But usually you can get from one side to the other in ten minutes. I see more traffic occurring. We are not expanding the number of streets to handle the people, and we are not expanding the width of current streets to handle the traffic. I'm not saying that our need now is to increase the traffic volume capacity of streets. I'm just saying traffic is going to be a problem.

The one issue everyone agrees on now in Ann Arbor—conservatives, liberals, students, and old folks—is that we've got some very bad streets. If you've got any money in City Hall, people say you ought to repair the streets first. The cost of repairing streets is a major problem and will be one five years from now. The cost approaches a quarter of a million dollars a mile and can get up to half a million a mile, depending on the condition of the street. In our town, we have 225 miles of street surfaces, and easily 50% of those can stand substantial repair.

Another problem is the cost of operating municipal government, and that goes back to taxation of houses—the property tax. Many people now with houses

Continued on next page

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Ann Arbor's Biggest Problems /continued



Downtown Ann Arbor is viewed by many as the core of the city which must remain healthy if the entire city is to remain healthy. Some charge the city is not investing enough money to improve the central area.

in Ann Arbor are paying taxes in the thousand-dollar-plus range a year, and it wasn't too long ago that they were paying property taxes of hundreds of dollars a year. Even though inflation has been high, I think that's a big difference. I think the value of people's houses has gone up more than their income. And their income is what they use to pay their property taxes. So people aren't willing to pay any more taxes. I think the problem of getting operating revenue for the city is going to be resolved more with federal and state aid than with local taxation.

Albert Wheeler

Democrat Albert Wheeler has been mayor of Ann Arbor since 1975 and is a candidate for a second term.

First, there's a problem in getting the revenue to operate the city. We're going to have to find ways of getting additional revenue with a minimum of increase of taxes to local citizens. It's important that the city hire a grants person—someone who keeps close tabs on available monies at the state and federal level and does the lobbying to get more funds.

In terms of expenditure, our attitudes and visions as citizens of Ann Arbor must respond to the fact that in times like this we can't afford all the frills and luxuries people want the city to provide. City revenues are not going up all that much, but city costs—particularly wages—are increasing at maybe seven to eight percent a year. I think there are times when you tighten your belt and don't do everything you'd do in better times.

One very serious problem is the lack of housing for folks who are making \$12,000 to \$15,000 a year. Housing in the city is very expensive. Furthermore, there just isn't enough housing available, or enough

building going on. Until the federal government gives some transfusion to this whole housing business, we're going to be in a very slow growth situation.

One of the major consequences of our high-priced housing in Ann Arbor is that we have no place in the community for people in low salary ranges to live—we have little to offer them. Those people do a lot of the service work in the community, but they're commuters—they can't afford to live here. This is not their community, not their home, but rather their factory, their plant.

I think that most folks in this community want to have a really vigorous, alive, downtown area. Some things are being done by private investors. But the city has not done an awful lot. I hope that we will at least explore carefully through a committee of citizens the possibility of a Downtown Development Authority as one way of funding downtown projects.

We're certainly not doing that much on our roads. Neighborhood roads especially have been neglected. Either we're going to have a multiplication of pot holes, poor patching jobs, or we're going to get desperate and go through our building authority to fix some of the most horrendous streets. Every time you do that, of course, it means more taxes.

The roads are just one example of accumulated neglect over the years. We've also got four-inch water mains in the city which are almost medieval compared to the newer 20-inch mains. And our sewage plant is already over capacity; that has environmental effects no one can tolerate. Fixing the Allen's Creek Drain will cost a minimum of \$5-\$6 million. And there's the whole question of landfill. Some time in the next five to fifteen years we're going to run out of a place to put our garbage. So we're going to have to do some work on some alternative ways of treating our solid waste.

Another problem area is human resources in the community. What we now do in the way of human services is what we can do through federal grants, but those are unpredictable and have so many darn regulations attached to them that a large number of people who need services are excluded. So we have to bite the bullet and look at providing services for the aged, those on fixed incomes, and lower-income people in the community. When we say lower income, low income people in this community are people making about \$8,000 a year if they have a family. Some people can just not make it financially, and there is presently no help the city can give them. I just think we have to find a way of assisting these folks.

I think also we have to look into some aspect of providing day care services for single parent families. And we're going to have to look at our whole health program. St. Joseph is moving out, so what can the city do to help pick up some of the slack?

A Summing Up

Looking back over the problems mentioned by the seven people we interviewed, a broad gamut of problems is represented. But most problems cited have a single basis: the city does not have enough money to solve them.

For example, the need for more moderate-priced housing in central Ann Arbor is recognized by both Republicans and Democrats. There is a fairly straightforward way to tackle this problem: simply subsidize its construction. But this costs money, and Ann Arbor citizens presently are not willing to pay the additional taxes needed to fund such a subsidy.

The same can be said about funding street repair, expanding our sewer treatment capacity, finding new ways for disposing of our garbage, or making improvements in downtown public facilities.

As Guy Larcom pointed out, there are no technological barriers to these projects. The major barrier is the unwillingness of Ann Arbor's citizens to pay for them. Robert Henry summed it up best when he said, "People want more services, and don't want to pay for them."

Most of those we talked to, realizing there is presently no more money to be squeezed out of the local populace, are looking to state and federal levels for the money to finance urgently needed projects. As competition between communities for state and federal dollars becomes more and more intense, there is a real question as to how much the city can depend on these revenue sources.

—DH

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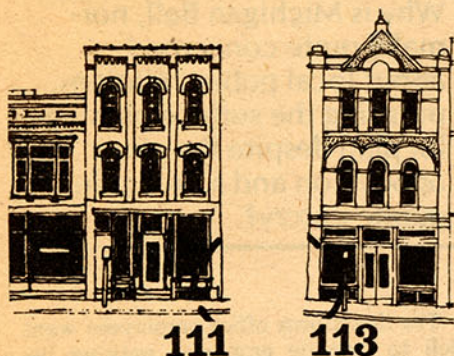
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Downtown Notes

Joseph and Carolyn Arcure and Betty Stremich have purchased the three-story building at 111 West Liberty, occupied by the Millard Press since 1894. When the rented east building of the Millard complex was purchased for a racquetball court, the remaining space was so tight that the press sold the building at 111 and will relocate on Packard near Carpenter. Work on the racquetball courts begins this month. They'll be ready by September.



The new owners of 111 will renovate the building for a downstairs shop and two-bedroom apartments on both the second and third floors. The Arcures own and live in the Haarer Building across the alley at 113 W. Liberty. Betty Stremich manages the Hillside Inn in Plymouth. New kitchens will be installed, replastering will be done, and the bright blue exterior paint will be removed, but the building's character and floor plan will be retained. Carolyn Arcure will act as construction manager for the renovation as she did with the Haarer Building. The owners have requested that the building be included in the Liberty Street Historic District.

Tenants are already lined up. The Peaceable Kingdom, an individualistic gallery gift shop of handcrafted items, should be in by April 1. Owned by Carol Wilfong, it's now located on Liberty Road past Stadium, a long trek for the many fans of her unusual items.

Tumurrawi is a new Mexican folk art shop in the remodeled filling station at 205 East Huron next to the gas company. The name comes from the sacred place of the Huichol Indians, who live in the state of Jalisco. That's where Alfonso Hernandez is from; he and his wife Vera own and operate the shop.

Applerose Natural Foods, 300 W. Liberty, has been given city approval to install a wrap-around porch roof around the building, somewhat like an old-fashioned covered sidewalk from frontier days. The exterior of the 100-year-old building will be redone in unpainted redwood. Don Behnke is doing the work.

Architects for the new fire station are Fry-Peters Associates. They did the preliminary plans for the successful federal grant application. Since work is required to begin by April, the city chose them to go ahead without the normal bidding procedure. Estimates are for probable construction costs of \$1,600,000 and construction time of nine months.

One office floor of Michigan Square, the new office/commercial complex on Liberty near Division, will be occupied in early February by Chi Systems, a hospital consulting group now located on Green Road. Developer Bill Martin of the First Martin Corporation said that two restaurants had been lined up for the second level, but no liquor license was available.

Whiting and Raymond Interiors has moved into 326 S. Main, (formerly Berry's Appliance and Faber's Fabrics). It carries medium to higher priced furniture, accessories, and custom drapery (Ron Whiting's specialty). John Raymond, a member of the American Society of Interior Designers, started his career over twenty years ago at Goodyear's on State Street.

E. F. Hutton & Company, stockbrokers, are moving from 115 East Liberty to 2452 East Stadium near Washtenaw. Need for more space and more parking were the reasons given for leaving downtown. No new tenant has been found as yet.

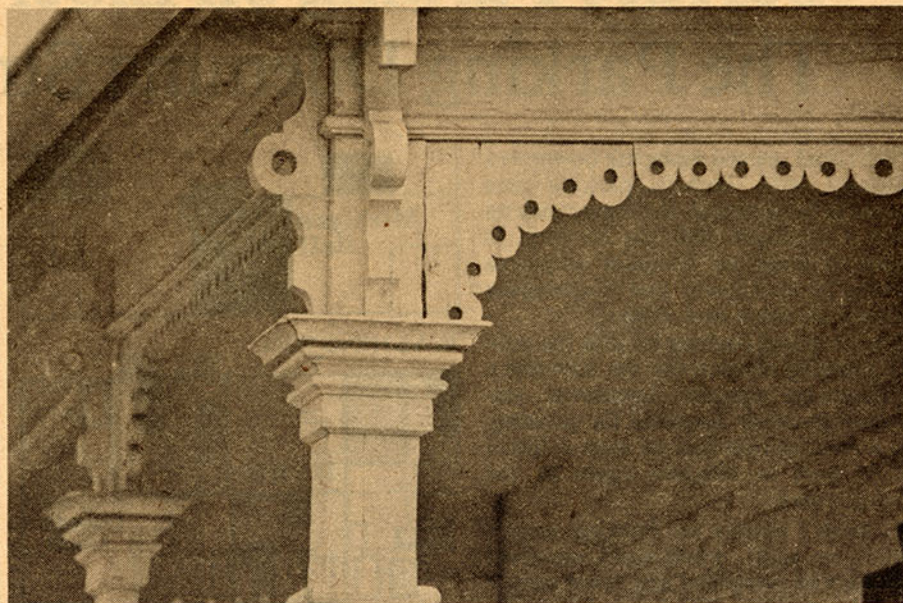
Contrary to what was stated about the Cafe Creole in last month's *Observer*, the Cafe Company Incorporated has not dissolved. It is alive and well, and the four stockholders, Madison Foster, George Hill, Bill Jones, and Tom Moorehead, are still planning to establish a Cafe Creole somewhere in Ann Arbor.

The Cafe Company did run into problems, however, when they tried to purchase the old Ann Arbor Railroad depot most recently known as the Depot House Cafe, at 416 S. Ashley. They didn't reach an agreement on the price with the building's owners Jayna Eckler and Robert Solstrom, because their lending institution advised them that the asking price was not commensurate with its appraised value. The liquor license was granted to the Cafe Company Incorporated at the 416 S. Ashley address, so the company will have to reapply for a license at another location.

To own a restaurant specializing in authentic Creole food has been a dream for the Cafe Company associates for years. Foster, Jones, and Moorehead grew up together in Monroe, Louisiana. Jones worked in his grandfather's and father's restaurant noted for its patented barbeque sauce. Now they're all in academic and business positions in Ann Arbor and Detroit. Assisted with seed money from the General Motors Minority Business Enterprise Group, the four want to found a restaurant with something different for Ann Arbor. Their menu would feature Creole food (pot dishes, including file gumbo) and Southern specialties, classic New Orleans drinks like Absinthe and Suissesse, along with popular standbys like barbeque ribs, chicken, steaks and hamburgers. An historic building and New Orleans jazz would help create a mellow atmosphere.

—MH

Test Of the Town



Can you identify this? It's north of the river.

By BOB BRECK

You could win your choice of any one of the thousands of record albums at the Liberty Music Shop, 417 East Liberty if you can identify the subject of this photo correctly. Let us know the specific location via letter or postcard mailed to the Ann Arbor Observer, 502 East Huron, Ann Arbor, 48104. No special delivery entries, please. The first two correct

answers win.

This month's photo was taken in old Lower Town north of the Huron River.

The double window with jigsaw trim in the January issue is on the house at 526 Hiscock at the corner of Fountain. Warren Steel and Polly Helmke correctly identified it and won albums of their choice from the Liberty Music Shop.

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Surface Parking on Liberty Street? The Parking Dilemma Strikes Again

The trend toward replacing downtown buildings with asphalt parking lots seemed to have abated, but it may pick up again if Michigan Bell has its way. It wants to build an 88-space employee parking lot on Liberty and Washington between Division and Fifth.

The proposed parking lot pits the public's growing concern for the downtown environment against downtown employees' growing demands for parking. It's a conflict that has no easy solution and is sure to blossom again in the coming years.

It wasn't always so. Parking wasn't always so tight, when more on-street parking was permitted and fewer people worked downtown. The demand for parking used to go unquestioned, just as the need for convenient corner gas stations had earlier, until the consequences of too many parking lots became evident. A block can stand one or two parking lots, maybe even three, but when it gets to the point that the remaining buildings stand out like lonely islands in a sea of shiny metal cars, the area takes on a radically different look. With wide-open spaces between buildings, with fewer shop windows and buildings to look at, the pedestrian feels he's in an environment designed for cars, not people.

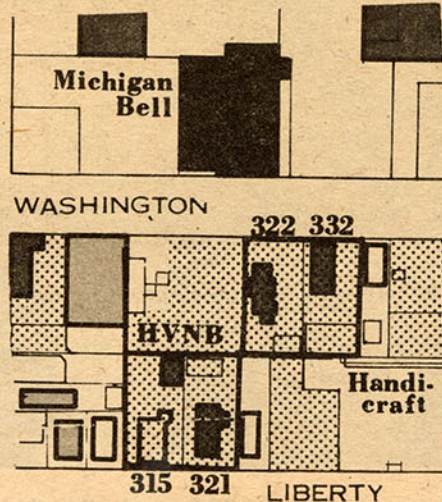
In a parking lot environment designed for cars, not people, the remaining buildings stand out like lonely islands in a sea of shiny metal cars.

When citizens realize the impact of parking on their city centers, public resistance to surface parking lots may be translated into zoning laws and planning policy. That is happening in Ann Arbor. Changing attitudes were incorporated in the Downtown Plan adopted by the planning commission and by city council as a planning guide for specific decisions that they must face. It recommends protecting historic buildings and pedestrian-oriented "character areas" like Liberty Street.

One half of the proposed Bell lot fronts on Liberty Street; it would remove the old houses at 315 and 321 in order to park 44 cars on the site. 44 cars would go on the Washington Street lots at 322 and 332.

In the Downtown Plan, Liberty Street is an important character area linking the State Street and Main Street shopping areas. The plan recommends severely restricting parking, confining it to lots of 10 to 15 cars.

The parking lot Bell would like to create clearly conflicts with the recommendations of the Downtown Plan on parking. It would also remove three old homes rated "B" (of highest local significance) on the Downtown Historic Architecture Survey conducted by the city's



With buildings at 122 and 132 East Washington removed for parking, three-fourths of the south side of the block would be parking lots.

Historic District Commission. They are 322 East Washington, a long, rambling red brick Queen Anne house built around 1875; its neighbor at 332 East Washington, a grey Greek Revival with gingerbread trim, probably dating from the 1850's; and 321 East Liberty, now the law offices of William Kelly (owner and seller of the four properties in question), a brick Greek Revival house built in 1845, and one of only two remaining examples left in Ann Arbor with stepped end gables. Because these are historic buildings, the city's Historic District Commission has an advisory role in any decisions by a public body that could have negative impact on them. None of the buildings have actually been protected by the city's historic district ordinance, which has not been applied to its full potential.

Under the present zoning ordinance, the Washington Street properties can be automatically rezoned to parking as an accessory use without planning commission or council approval because they are contiguous to the Bell building at 315 East Washington (being directly across the street from it). So there's nothing the city can do to legally prevent the south side of the 300 block of Washington Street from becoming three quarters parking lot. But the Liberty Street parcels could not get automatic parking rezoning as accessory parking, according to Acting City Attorney Bruce Laidlaw, even though they abut the Washington Street properties at one very small point.

The Downtown Plan warns about the consequences of present zoning policy on parking: "Consideration should be given to prohibiting parking as an accessory use. Presently structures in the downtown can be demolished to provide customer [or employee] parking near businesses. This policy eventually weakens the integrity of whole blocks of closely-spaced businesses."

The Southfield-based Real Estate Division of Michigan Bell has indicated that it's going ahead with plans to convert the entire property to parking. Its option on the property has been extended, and it is expected to submit site plans for the lot to the Planning Department, even though Planning Director Martin Overhiser has written Bell that his department will most likely oppose the Liberty Street rezoning, and even though planning commission and council seem likely to back him up. The Bell officials from Southfield have hinted they might take the matter to court.

The big question is this: why is Michigan Bell, normally quite concerned about local public relations, pursuing the surface parking lot plan despite the city's opposition and a probable public outcry? —especially when the property involved is prime land for downtown development with a price tag of \$450,000? Figuring conservatively, that works out to \$4500 a parking space for 88 spaces in land alone, or \$6000 a space including site preparation, landscaping, surfacing, and design fees. That's nearly double what spaces in a parking structure cost.

Why does Bell want these properties so much? Because of employee pressure, that's why.

In the past, Bell, as a regulated public utility under public scrutiny, has been reluctant to incur substantial costs to provide free employee parking when not all private employers do. That extra expense would appear wasteful in the public eye and would have to be passed on to unhappy phone customers in the form of higher rates.

But employees are pressuring Bell for convenient parking. And Ann Arbor manager Harry Kenworthy says, "We are making a good faith effort to provide

parking for our employees at the going rate. If we can at a reasonable price obtain [the Kelly] property for the possibility of future use, it could be leased to employees at reasonable rates."

Last year an employee parking committee was formed by Fred Chase and Duane Mannlein, Bell union officials and 20-year employees at the downtown central office. They collected 365 employee signatures on a petition asking for help with their employee parking problems and sent it to Michigan Bell President David Easlick. He sent a high-ranking executive out to Ann Arbor to look into the problem. "Then we realized they were serious about it," says union head Fred Chase.

Why is Michigan Bell, normally quite concerned about local public relations, pursuing the surface parking lot plan despite the city's opposition and a probable public outcry?

The downtown office employees want Bell to provide employee parking because:

- rates have risen to \$20 a month and further increases are likely.
- many other employers (including the University of Michigan and the Ann Arbor News) provide free or inexpensive employee parking.
- physical safety has become a concern in recent years, especially with female operators working overtime or leaving on evening shifts. (Currently the company pays cabs to take nighttime employees home or to their cars.)

Many solutions were investigated, including park-and-ride schemes. But employees were too widely scattered throughout the country and worked too



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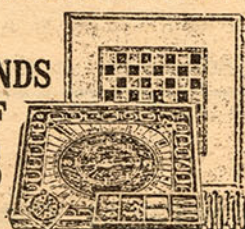
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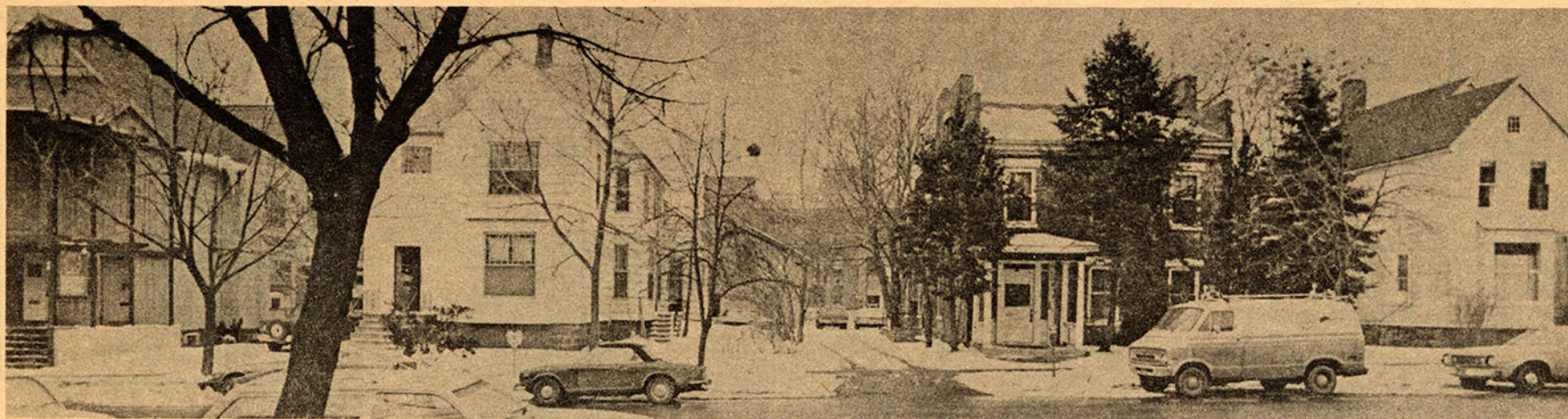
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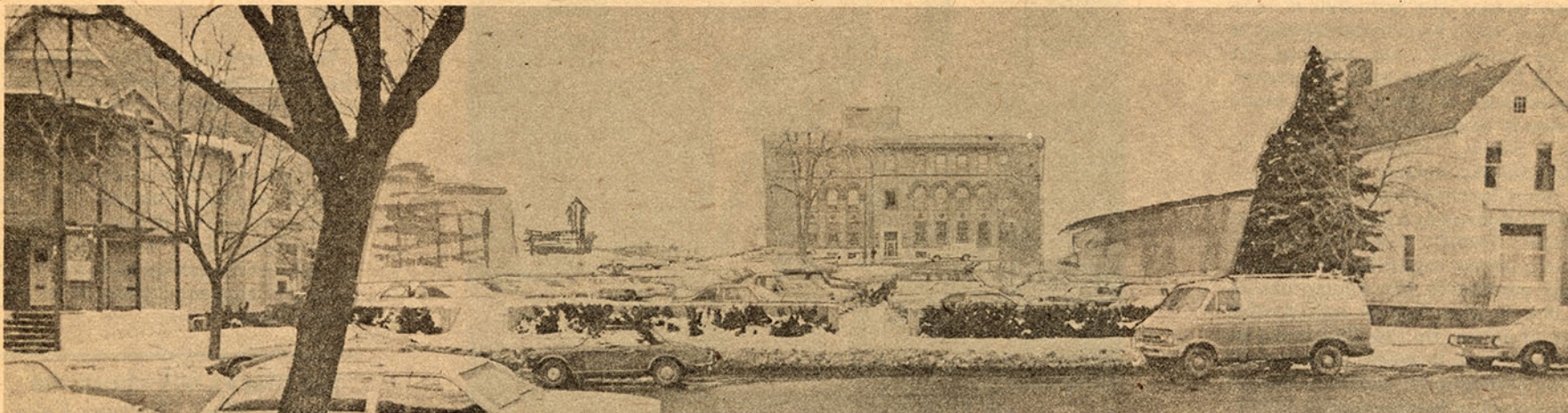
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Site of the Liberty Street side of the proposed parking lot. 315 is second from the left, 321 is second from the right.



Dave Breen

How the site might look as a surface parking lot landscaped according to city requirements.

many different shifts to make it feasible. The union then suggested several options:

- leasing parking space from the city or private owners. None could be leased within the two or three block distance acceptable to employees.

- a special allowance for central office Bell employees. This would be similar to the company's special City of Detroit allowance, which provides \$1.40 a day to help defray extra parking and city income tax expenses incurred by workers in the city of Detroit. Bell policy-makers rejected the allowance, however, on the grounds that it would be contractual and therefore had to be bargained for. Downtown Ann Arbor union members fear that their limited local problem would be ignored by the state union bargaining committee, because most Bell employees work in less tightly-developed areas where parking is readily available.

- the outright purchase of convenient employee lots. Bell is now pursuing this option with the Liberty/Washington property.

When the Liberty/Washington surface lot idea first came up, representatives from the Historic District Commission and Ann Arbor Tomorrow (the downtown revitalization group) opposed it and looked for alternative solutions. Most attractive was the idea of leasing two floors from the new parking structure proposed

on Washington between Division and State, behind Ann Arbor Bank. But the city could give Bell no realistic assurances that it could be built within 2½ years, so the Real Estate Division is going ahead with plans for the surface lots.

What happens next?

If the Liberty Street rezoning occurs, it could lead in the direction of even more surface parking downtown, according to Marc Rueter, principal author of the Downtown Plan.

If Michigan Bell can't get the Liberty property rezoned, it could still convert 322 and 332 East Washington to surface parking. Those 44 spaces would barely make a dent in its employee parking problem, however, unless other properties were also purchased.

The old houses would almost certainly be removed even if Bell passes them over (because the land they occupy is so valuable) unless a sensitive developer could come up with a plan and financing to renovate them and incorporate them into a more dense development of the site. Such an interest was at one time expressed in the 1845 building at 321 East Liberty. The houses could be moved, starting at \$5000 for the frame house, and \$25,000 for the brick ones.

If the Liberty/Washington surface lot falls through, Bell will seek other park-

ing. Union officials like the idea of an interim parking allowance for employees until leased space in a new city carport could be obtained.

Speculation that Bell might leave downtown because of the parking crunch is pure fantasy, according to manager Harry Kenworthy. \$15,000,000 worth of immovable equipment is tied up downtown.

One thing is almost certain. Downtown employees will continue to pressure their employers to provide them with parking. Parking has already become a negotiating issue for firefighters and police; city and county government employees could well be next. We're sure to be faced with more conflicts between employee parking demands and public environmental concerns in the future.

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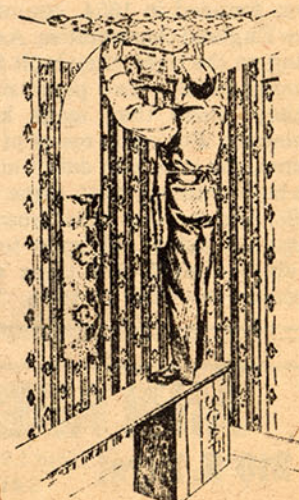

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Who Is Bill Trembl, and Why Does He Write That Column?

Often the column begins with a few paragraphs of nostalgia, especially about the Depression years: boys chasing ice wagons to get a hunk of ice, playing baseball in alleys, and swimming in the river.

Then the focus abruptly shifts and there follows a bitter contrast with our present society: college students who by receiving food stamps "would rather chisel than earn," "quirky Californians who indulge in homosexuality and stoke up on marijuana," the "subversives" who favored the North Vietnamese during the war, the "traitors" who exposed the names of CIA agents, and, in general, "the spectacles of idiocy which assail one's senses from every side today."

"As I See It," reporter William R. Trembl's Sunday column in *The Ann Arbor News*, is consistently the most controversial piece run by a usually moderate newspaper. Trembl's views are his response to a society which he sees as dangerously permissive. His column has its fans, but it also has a considerable number of critics. By now Trembl can be certain that when he writes a column denouncing pornography, flailing conscientious objectors, or lauding capital punishment, angry hands throughout the city will begin writing letters to his editor (who publishes virtually all of them), vehemently protesting Trembl's views. As many of these letters ridicule Trembl's column as seriously address the issues he raises.

We got together with Bill Trembl recently to find out where he is coming from. We wanted to discover why he writes the things he writes.

Bill Trembl in person is just as opinionated and out-front as he is in his column. He stands in boyish awe of his heroes (who are typically "tough, gutty" people), and he is in equal measure condemning of those who whine, complain, and alibi rather than face difficulties squarely. He is quick to express dismay over those who do not act with honor, and just as quickly feels reverence for those who do.

We began by asking him about his childhood, and Trembl, who is 51 years old, began talking of his home town as if his memories of it were fresh in his mind. "I grew up in northwestern Massachusetts — a small factory town called Turners Falls, on the Connecticut River just south of the Vermont line. It was strictly a blue-collar community. Actually, we were probably only 25 miles from Amherst, but their culture never got to our area."

"Turners Falls," Trembl continued, "was founded in 1654, one of the early New England communities. As a result of being on the river, they built factories in it immediately—two paper mills and a cutlery where they made knives and tableware. For years many of the immigrants, the ones who didn't stop in Boston but continued west, came to Turners Falls. And so it was a real cross section of people we had. It only grew to be a town of six thousand, but there were three Catholic churches in town. You never

hear of that many Catholic churches in a town that size. Sometimes there's none. But because of the cross-section of people there, there was a Polish, a French, and an Irish Catholic church. My father was Czech, and my mother, a Murphy, was Irish, so we went to the Irish church, St. Mary's."

"You don't know what it is to be on welfare. I know, because I've worn the holes in pants, the shoes that didn't fit, and everything else."

"My father died when I was ten years old, so I never knew him too well. He was what we call up there a paper maker, which is a factory hand in a paper mill. My father was what I considered a war hero. He was in a number of battles in World War I — the Argonne Forest, and so on. And he died pretty bravely, too — of stomach cancer. He was two years dying. That had an impression on me."

"My dad was a working type of guy, came back from the war and tried to make his life as best he could with little education in a mill town that had no future for anyone. We were always a buck short, we always were."

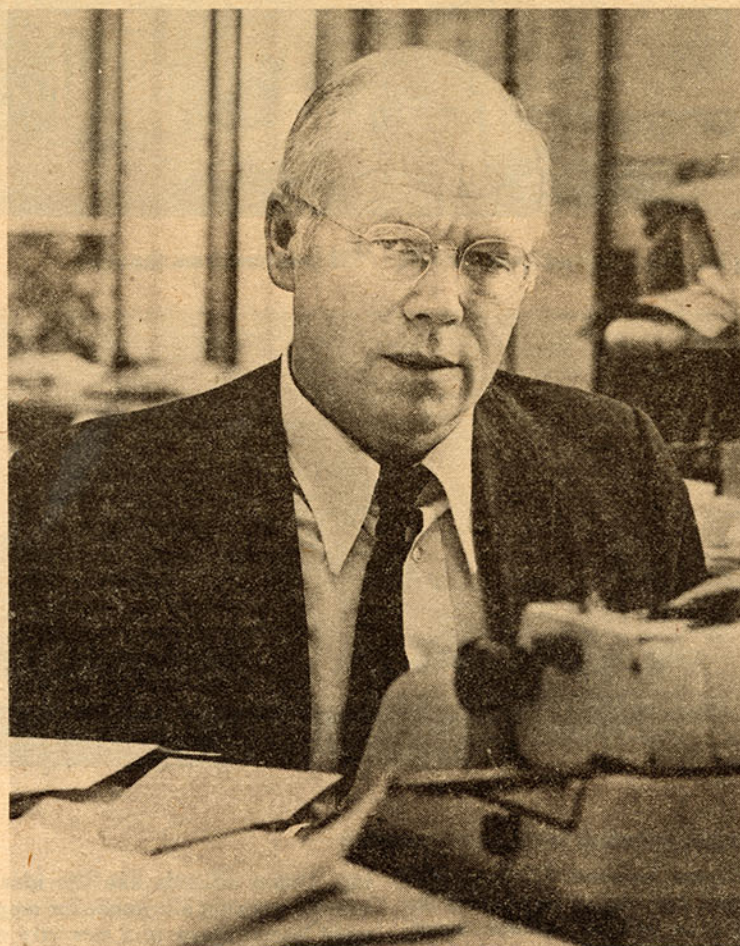
"When my dad died, there was just myself and my brother, who was a couple of years older than I, and my mother."

Father died in '35, when the Depression was supposedly over. It wasn't, really. You talk about welfare. Well, you don't know what it is to be on welfare. I know, because I've worn the holes in the pants, the shoes that didn't fit, and everything else."

"I can remember when we didn't have anything. You had a pot of soup, and that was it. It was hard times."

"My mother worked as a seamstress on a welfare program. And she really worked. She's a little gal — weighed only a hundred pounds. She had an eighth grade education, but she was a tough gal. She came from a family of ten. Her mother and father came from Ireland. Both were illiterate when they died — they never learned to read or write. Just tough-minded immigrants who had a farm and that's about all. It was sturdy stock in those days."

How did kids spend their free time back then in Turners Falls? "In those days, I guess your wants were simple, and your play was simple. I find it hard to realize that people are griping today about the Ann Arbor Recreation Department programs for kids here. I stand in awe of them, because in our day they had one park — they called it Unity Park, and they had a shack where they kept the sports equipment—a couple of balls and bats—and that's where we spent most of our summers, in this park. We also played in the back alley. The sewer was home plate, and when the trucks came down it, you



Photos by Dave Breen

6 The Ann Arbor News, Sunday,



As I See It

By William B. Trembl

had to look out. I remember I got hit by a truck there one time, running for something. We had all sorts of accidents down there."

Trembl went on to high school, where the atmosphere was hardly academic. "In high school, because World War II had started, that was the whole thing on our minds. As a result, most of us in high school (and we weren't very academically inclined, anyway) thought, 'Why study, anyway, when you're going into the service to fight a war?' As a result, most of us had terrible grades and didn't bother to do anything worthwhile as far as academics went."

"The blacks talk about the ghetto. Well, Turners Falls had a ghetto, there's no question. Generation upon generation there."

Joining the armed forces held a great allure for Turners Falls youth. War was seen as an adventure: glamorous, exciting, and patriotic. Trembl now shakes his head ruefully when he thinks back about his youthful dreams of fighting a war. "How foolish you are when you are young! We used to talk about how when we had won this war, we would police the world. And we had a fantastic notion about our invulnerability. It reminds me of an old Robert Goulet recording, which had in it the words: 'We thought we could fight and never lose.' We had no concept of what war was all about. I stand in horror at our naivety."

A slight hernia almost spoiled Trembl's dreams of going to war. "We all went down for a military physical exam, and everybody's cards came back 1-A in my class, except mine. I was 4-F. I remember bursting into tears. I was 18 years old, but I wept. And I told my mother, 'They're not going to do this to me. They just won't do it.' And I went up to the draft board meeting one night, and I guess I made a little speech: 'You gotta let me go! I want to serve my country! Please let me go!' So finally they had a doctor take me out into the hallway and examine me for a hernia. And then they went back in their room and buzz-buzzed around, and then called me in and told me, 'Well, if you want to go down and take the induction physical, we'll let you.' I was so happy, I was on Cloud Nine."

Trembl went on to spend two years in the Seabees, the Navy's counterpart of the Army Engineers. Life as a Seabee turned out to be less than glamorous. As a low-level enlisted man, he was little more than an unskilled construction

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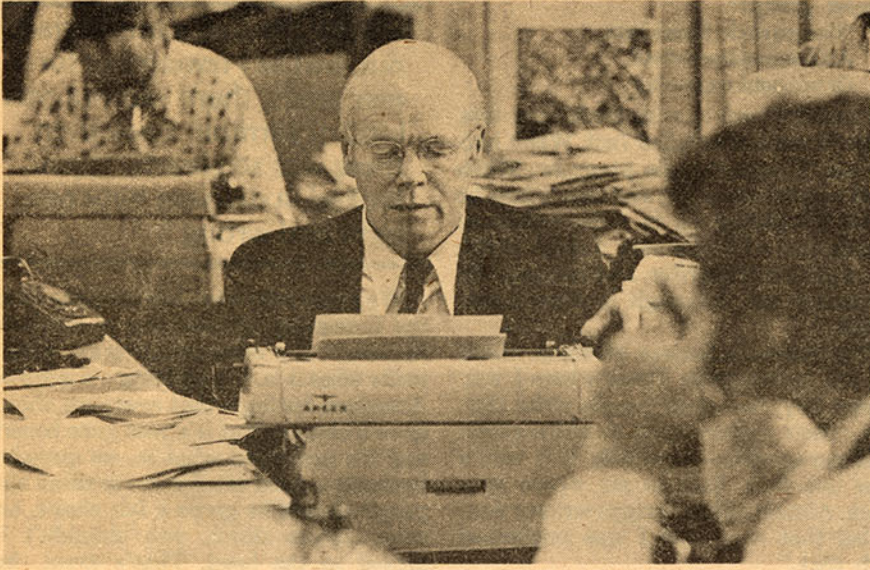
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laborer. Stationed on Tinian Island in the Pacific, his battalion built coral air strips and never encountered any hostile enemy forces.

Out of the service in 1945, 20-year-old Bill Trembl headed straight back to Turners Falls. But he found his home town a disillusioning place. Jobs were scarce, and for two years he went from one laboring job to another. "Seeing a life going nowhere," as he describes it, he was beginning to get desperate. "When we were 18, we thought of being in the service, but we didn't think any farther than that. And you come out, and you're not skilled. And you see all the people in Turners Falls and all around that area who are bent and old and 75, and they just could never cut it financially—they just couldn't do it. How could you do it? You never could get yourself out of the ghetto. The blacks talk about the ghetto. Well, Turners Falls had a ghetto, there's no question. Generation upon generation there. Some are still there. I'm 51 years old. There's guys 51 there who went into the service, and that's the only time they ever left home.

"As far back as high school, newspapering always had a romance about it for me. . . . It always seemed to me, Boy, to be the first to know!"

"I could see that education was the only way out, if I wanted to do anything. There was no job, no future without it. What else could I do?"

Knowing that the GI Bill would finance his college education, Trembl applied to a number of schools and was finally accepted at Butler University in Indianapolis, Indiana. Even before he entered, he knew he wanted to be a newspaper reporter. "As far back as high school, news-

papering always had a romance about it for me. I never met any newspaper guys, really, except the stringer for the Greenfield paper in our town. But it always seemed to me, 'Boy, to be the first to know!'"

While studying at Butler, Trembl worked as a copy boy at the *Indianapolis Times*, where he met his future wife, Doris, an engraver's artist there. In 1952, a week after graduating, he and Doris were married, although he had still not found a job. But three weeks later, a spot for police reporter opened up at the newspaper in Richmond, Indiana. The Trembls spent four years there while he worked as a reporter and feature writer. But the pay was low and the job generally lost its challenge. Restless, Trembl started hunting for a better job.

In 1956, a job opened up at *The Ann Arbor News* for a reporter to cover City Hall, and that almost became his beat. "While I was talking by phone from Indiana to Art Gallagher [The News' editor at that time] about the job, I told him I had covered the police beat and liked it pretty well. He said the guy at the *News* covering police doesn't like it very well, so we could transfer you—you take the police beat and he could cover City Hall. So we did and that's how it worked out. That's how I came to cover the police beat."

And so, for 19 years—up until a year and a half ago—Bill Trembl was *The Ann Arbor News* police reporter. That's a long time to stay on one beat, Trembl told us. "The police beat is usually the break-in job for cub reporters 'til they can learn where the door is. Or it's some old codger like myself who has covered it so long he doesn't know anything else. There's nothing in between."

"Fact of the matter was that my nature just tended to gravitate toward instant news, and no other kind of beat on a paper produces that kind of news. On other

beats, much of the news comes from scheduled meetings. There are patterns and you pretty well cover a pattern. That type of static atmosphere didn't appeal to me. Still doesn't, as far as that goes. Whereas the police news is all instant news—it all happens immediately, often at weird hours.

"We had an arrangement for a long time with the police agencies here to call us when something happens—even in the middle of the night. They would call me, and I used to go out on quite a few things in those days—fatal accidents, fires, a killing of any consequence. So you're going at quite a clip, sometimes. Things happen so fast on the police beat—you have to move to get it. That appealed to me. That was the reason I stayed on it. I had opportunities to get off it, but I didn't take them."

"Jim Bishop, the columnist, has said, 'I never trust a man who has been on the police beat too long.' And he's got a point, because after you have the job for so many years, you become personally acquainted with all the cops, especially cops, because cops are a peculiar breed."

Still, Trembl is not so sure now it is such a good idea to stay on the police beat that long. "Jim Bishop, the columnist, has said, 'I never trust a man who has been on a police beat too long.' And he's got a point, because after you have the job for

so many years, you become personally acquainted with all the cops, especially with cops, because cops are a peculiar breed. You sympathize with them, you can't help but do that. Of course the name of the game is to write it straight, without favoring them or anyone else. But you do—you get pretty well into their way of life. You begin to think it's all black and white. You become programmed to their way of thinking.

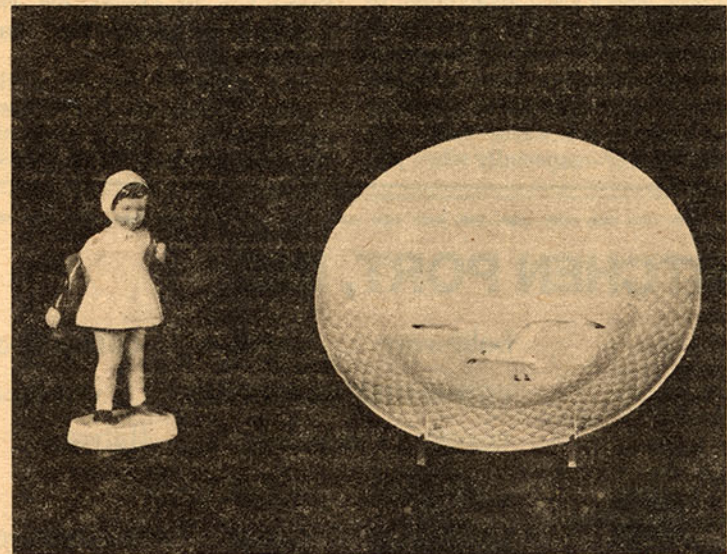
"But I stayed on because I liked it. I liked most of the policemen on the job. I liked their attitudes, and they seemed pretty competent. And you do what you like when you can, and that's what I liked—the police beat."

In recent years, however, Trembl came to like the police beat less and less. In 1975, he requested a transfer and left the police beat to become the *News*' courts reporter. He described to us his mounting desire to get off the police beat: "It was a growing thing. I had just had enough. I had seen enough police stations, badges, and guns, enough scenes. I just didn't need any more. I'm pretty squeamish in a lot of ways. I could never be a surgeon, for instance. But the police beat never bothered me that way—what I saw. Fatal accidents, murders, violence. I never thought about it afterwards."

"It was something else that made me want to change beats. It just seemed like I was a corked bottle and I was filled up with it. I had all I could hold of the hostile world of the police. The police themselves are hostile because they have to be. Either that or they don't do the job. The hostility of the people that they have to deal with. The hostility in jails."

Continued on next page

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Who Is Bill Trembl? /continued

"Handling the police beat you're dealing—like the grocer deals in groceries—with trouble. That's all you're dealing with. When you call the police, you've got trouble. It could be as little as two drunks fighting, or it could be a homicide.

"After awhile I got to wondering: why did I tear down this street . . . just to get there and see this kind of misery? It's a ghoulish profession number one—police reporting is."

"I'd been running too long to get to unhappy scenes. When you hurry, you should hurry to something that's worthwhile. But when you rush around to get to a human being that's been destroyed or a building that's burned down, and there's grief and sorrow and all that. After awhile I got to wondering: why did I tear down this street, sometimes faster than the speed limit, just to get there and see this kind of misery? It's a ghoulish profession number one—police reporting is. You're not there unless something bad has happened.

"It finally got to me. It just got senseless to me to go dashing around to record for tomorrow's garbage pail somebody's misery, somebody's grief. I thought there must be something better than this.

"Although, in the early days, the adrenalin was flowing, and I thought the police beat was a great thing. I was like a kid, a juvenile who, if there's a fight in the school yard, has to run and see. That's what a lot of police reporters are: they are just kids in school yards who are running to see. Not only that, you've got a bonus: you get to write about it, tell other people what a miserable thing it was."

Still, Trembl feels a great attachment to newspaper reporting. "I've been in it twenty-five years this year, and somehow I've never lost the feeling that it's magic. Oh, there are a lot of days when it's a long way from magic—it's worse that anything I can think of—especially when you

get sued, or you get the wrong address in your story, or irate calls, and that.

"But I've never lost the feeling: I'd pay 'em to work here. Which is crazy. That's what a kid says. I guess it's the fact that you can go somewhere or see something, and you're soaking it all up and then you're squeezing it out on a typewriter paper, and it says what happened. I feel like I'm lucky to be able to do that."

Trembl is a top-notch reporter, but reporting is not what has made him a household word in Ann Arbor. It is his weekly column. The column, he told us, "began in the fall of '72, after Cal Samra left for Battle Creek. He had been doing a weekly column which he wanted to see continued, so he asked me, 'You want to try that column, Trembl?' And I said, 'That's all I need, Cal, just one more thing.' But he asked the boss man, 'How about letting Trembl do the column?' The boss said, 'I suppose, if he wants to.'"

"I was like a kid, a juvenile who, if there's a fight in the school yard, has to run and see. That's what a lot of police reporters are: they are just kids in school yards who are running to see."

The column is not easy to write, reports Trembl. Sometimes it is "pure agony." He gets ideas from people's suggestions, or from things that appear in the paper. After he finds an idea, "I spend a couple of hours of research on something that is pertinent to it, and then weave it in. It's not of whole cloth. It's a terrible ordeal, really. None of them come easy. I haven't had one that flows out." The deadline is Thursday morning, and not infrequently Trembl has to devote his Wednesday evenings to completing that week's column.

The column's literary style is distinctive. Paragraphs are reduced to short sentences to make a dramatic point. Thus, for example, Trembl ended a column

on the need for F.B.I. surveillance of extremist groups:

Nice guys do finish last.
And sometimes dead.
Or without a country.

We asked Trembl how he developed this style. "I remember when Jack Webb had the old 'Dragnet' radio program. Webb used to write the stuff, and that's how he wrote it—ending up in terse sentences that carried a lot of punch. I think Webb was a genius of a writer, and he probably influenced me, although it wasn't conscious."

"Furthermore, Scripps-Howard, which had the *Indianapolis Times* where I was a copy boy, had their people write that way. Their writers used to write short, brief paragraphs—especially if it was a page one deal. Five or six words at a crack. Almost all the Scripps writers were styled that way, and I was impressed with that."

Why, we asked Trembl, do your columns often have such negative themes? "Maybe I'm just a nostalgia nut, but as I remember former years, there was not this kind of turmoil, this kind of social abortion. Back then, there was so clearly, if you looked, a division between right and wrong. And those who were wrong said, 'Yeah, I'm wrong, and chop my fingers off, or whatever you're going to do.'"

"But today, it would seem to me that right and wrong are completely fuzzed up, and the ones who are wrong and admit they're wrong say, 'Yeah: So what? Pay me for it, or give me recompense, or I'm poverty stricken, out of the ghetto, or I wasn't toilet trained.' That's just a cop-out, really."

"Not that you've got to hang 'em for the least little thing, but I mean, really, if you dance, you'd better pay the fiddler, or your society's going to go. That's all. It's the total questioning of almost any authority or rules at all that bothers me."

"Maybe I'm just a nostalgia nut, but as I remember former years, there was not this kind of turmoil. Back then there was so clearly, if you looked, a division between right and wrong."

We asked him what has brought about the increasing questioning of authority he sees. "It's compassion gone wild is really what it is. It's a feeling—a good old American feeling—that everyone should have a chance. But it's just gone berserk, and it's contorted what is, no question, basically a good attribute—to think that people should be given a fair shake, and when you're down, you shouldn't be kicked in the head. That's great, but you've got to differentiate—you can't just say that no matter what you do, I'll forgive you."

"So if you're not mentally deficient, and you go ahead and commit a crime or do something else wrong, it seems to me you did it consciously and you should pay consciously. You shouldn't say there were extenuating circumstances. Gee, when we busted a window when we were kids, we got the full treatment, no question. There wasn't any appeal then. It just seems that we're full of alibis these days."

"I think it all culminated with the Vietnam War. There were some good people who opposed the war—nothing wrong with that. But some of the forces were so violent against the entire system. The war is one thing, but to bring down the whole government?"

"I think permissiveness is the root of our problem today. People saying, 'We'll give 'em one more step, one more chance.'"

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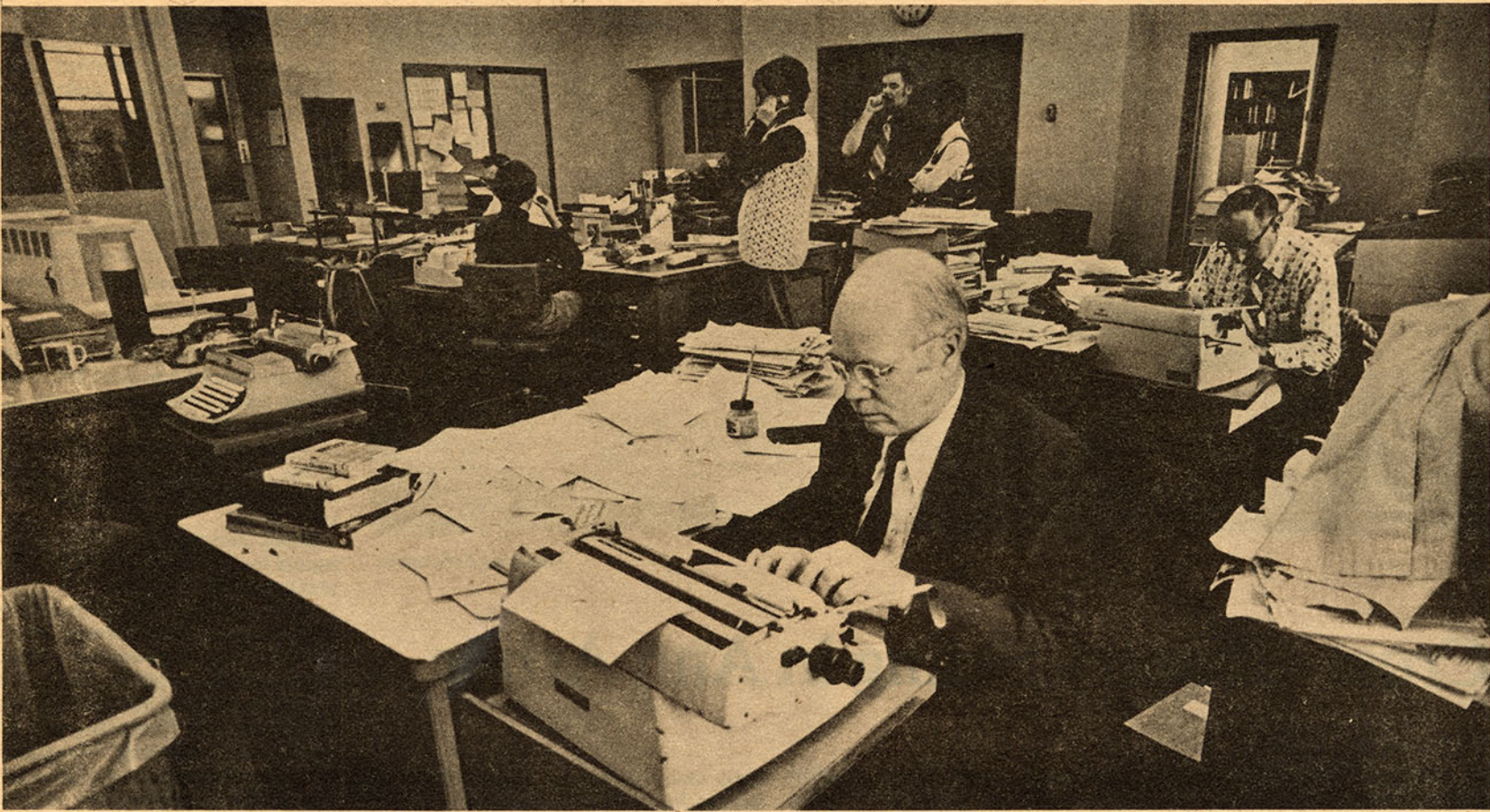
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I think permissiveness came with some of the educators starting in the fifties saying, 'Don't restrict your child. Don't tell 'em this, don't tell 'em that, because it'll give 'em a trauma.' I think that's where it started. And then when these kids grew up...

"It just seems like we're full of alibis these days."

"We're all guilty of it—giving our kids rides when they could walk. It's pampering, really. You always want something better for your kids than you had. But that's not right. Let 'em rise to their own level, is my belief. I've got to admit, I worry about my kids. [He has four, ages 15 to 21.] Are they going to get a college education? As if they must have one! But they don't have to have one. It's not the end of all things if they don't. But I admit, I'm as guilty as anyone in being a permissive parent."

Trembl leaves no doubt that he believes our society is more decadent today than in former decades. We suggested to him that maybe things just *look* worse today than in former years, perhaps we tend to see the past as rosier than it really was. Trembl's response was that only a historian who studies the matter deeply can find out for sure. "But you have to ask, looking back at past times: was it just as flagrant, just as non-law-abiding, just as indecent? Were we as blasé back in those

days as we are now? And the answer has got to come back: no, we weren't. This society today cannot be as well-mannered or as well-regulated in morals as in former years."

Anyone who reads the *News* letters columns knows that Bill Trembl gets the lion's share of reader criticism among *News* reporters, and most of that criticism is due to his column. Trembl is ambivalent about this criticism. "I have a very vocal opposition. Seems like they're often intellectuals—professors at the University. The guys who work for a living often don't have time to write."

"There's been a lot of negative comment, but, of course, the ones who support my views write me much of the time, which doesn't help much at all. Or they call me and say how good a column was, and all that."

"I think if these intellectuals are all that concerned with what I say, then it must be hitting somewhere around the target area. Or else they would just shunt it aside and say it's not worth responding to. If things bothered me as much as my columns bother some of my critics, I wouldn't read it. I don't read things that infuriate me. But they read it, then they get mad, and then they write a letter to the editor."

What about Bill Trembl when he is off-duty? We asked him how he spent his time beyond the fifty to sixty hours a week spent on the job. "I have a terrible lack of hobbies. I'm very one-sided. Especially when I was on the police beat, because that became my hobby, avocation, everything else."

"I have a very vocal opposition. Seems like they're often intellectuals—professors at the university. The guys who work for a living often don't have time to write."

"I don't do much in my off time. We've got two back lots behind us, and my wife is a great gardener, and I try to help. Hunting, fishing, bowling—nothing appeals to me. When I get through a week here at the *News*, I've had it. I sleep a lot. I watch 'Hogan's Heroes,' or 'McHale's Navy,' or 'The Three Stooges' on TV—anything light. The more assinine, the better. Bob Hope is fine, but Soupy Sales was my favorite. When he introduced the pie-throwing thing, I thought that was great. I watched Soupy all the time."

The messages about our society Trembl sends through his column are expressed in highly dogmatic, self-assured prose. It was therefore something of a surprise to find that in person, Bill Trembl is far from cocky and self-impressed. "My kids take my work for granted. It doesn't fascinate them. And as far as being important in the community, I picture myself as an ant, just an ant, really. Sometimes I wonder how much of my stuff is ever read. When I'm feeling that way, it's kind of a feeling of futility I get. And then, of course, there are feelings of great self-doubt when all the negative letters come in. Once in a while you say, 'Gee, was I that far off?'"

But alongside his self-doubts, there is in Trembl a resolute quality—a quality he sees in those he admires. He is determined to hold to his beliefs, even though they have subjected him to considerable ridicule in this community. "I'm not going to back down. Their criticism is not going to crush me. It won't destroy me. I'm going to stick to it."

—DH

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Photos by Bob Gwizdz

Cross-Country Skiing in Ann Arbor

Cross-country skiing — the term conjures up rugged, experienced skiers traversing long stretches of hills and valleys. In fact, however, cross-country skiing requires only a few minutes of instruction to get started and can be done in any open space around the city.

Cross-country skiing equipment can be rented from any of the five stores listed on the page. The price is from \$6.50 to \$8.50 a day, and about \$20.00 a week.

Also known as ski touring and Nordic skiing, cross-country skiing is not new; rock carvings from the Stone Age depict skiers chasing game. Introduced to America over 100 years ago by Scandinavian immigrants, cross-country skiing didn't catch on until the late 1960's. Now, even people who used to stay indoors all winter are getting involved.

"Cross-country sales have steadily climbed over the last four years," says Dirk Bus, manager of Tee and Ski Inc., 2455 S. State. Himself a Nordic skier for the last six years, Bus claims that the sport has grown more this winter than in any other previous year. "There are a lot more people in it this year, that's for sure."

There are a variety of reasons for the popularity of cross-country skiing. The most obvious is that it offers instant skiing. There's no need to drive to a ski resort — a couple of inches of snow on the ground and you are ready to go.

"If you've got an hour between classes," says Bob Claerr, an employee of Round River Adventures Ltd., "you can go skiing."

Many cross-country skiers like to con-

trast their sport with Alpine (downhill) skiing. Joann Brown, a 19-year-old LSA student from Traverse City likes cross-country skiing because she enjoys the outdoors. "You get back in the woods and it's really pretty," she says. "It's also a lot less expensive than downhill."

"You can make it anything you want," asserts Steve Vernick, a salesman at The Bivouac. "You start out an expert and keep getting better. You can race downhill or walk slow and poetically across a golf course. Besides, compared to downhill it's so inexpensive it's ridiculous."

Besides the greater ease and relative lack of expense, cross-country skiing differs from Alpine in another important factor — it is much safer.

"I've never heard of anyone getting hurt cross-country skiing," says Claerr, who teaches the ski touring clinic at Bivouac. A cross-country buff for years, Claerr claims his only injury was a slightly bruised thumb. "I was crossing a lake and slipped on the ice," he said with a smile.

An important aspect of cross-country skiing is that the skier can make what he wants out of it. The sport lends itself to backpacking, bird watching and photography. Nordic skiers can enter competi-

tion if so inclined. In the 1976 Winter Olympics a 20-year-old Guilford, Vermont man named Bill Koch became the first American to win a medal (a silver) in Olympic competition.

Like Alpine skiing, cross-country skiing offers social opportunities. The Washtenaw Ski Touring Club meets every second Wednesday at the Old Heidelberg, and Round River Adventures Ltd. offers Friday night moonlight tours.

The price of cross-country skiing equipment is so low that it startles people. Every ski shop in Ann Arbor has a package deal that offers skis, boots, bindings and poles for around \$80. Schneiders Sport Shop offers three separate packages for under \$100.

What is even more startling, however, is the price of top-of-the-line equipment. A high quality set of equipment will run only \$150.

Cross-country skiing equipment can be rented for from \$6.50 to \$8.50 a day, and about \$20.00 a week.

Until recently, all cross-country skis were imported from Norway, but a couple of American manufacturers, Fisher and Spaulding, have entered the market. Skis cost in the area of \$40-\$85 and are available in wood or fiberglass, with waxable or unwaxable bottoms. Waxable bottom skis are preferred by experienced skiers and cross-country racers. The wax is necessary to provide traction. Unwaxable skis have textured bottoms — fish scale, for instance — which produce the necessary traction.

Fiberglass skis are currently out-selling the wood models, even though they are a little more expensive and professionals prefer wood skis. Wood-bottomed skis must be waterproofed with pine tar to protect them from warpage; fiberglass or plastic bottomed wood skis needn't be. There are, however, definite advantages to wood skis. They are less slippery, hold wax better and keep their camber (the bow in the ski which helps produce traction) longer.

The best skis are made of birch and laminated hickory (oddly enough the hickory is cut in the U.S. and shipped to Norway to be manufactured into skis). The harder hickory is used on the outside, the lighter birch on the inside. Less expensive wood models are all birch.

Cross-country skis come in four sizes (by width and weight). The narrowest and lightest is the racing ski. It provides the most flexibility but is therefore most breakable. Most recreational Nordic buffs use light touring skis. General

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touring skis are a little wider and have a little more camber. Since they are stronger than light touring skis, a skier can jump and clown around on them. The widest, stiffest cambered ski is the mountaineering model, used for extended ski touring and ski-packing. They give better downhill control, but are really more ski than most people need.

A good pair of boots can be purchased for around \$30. Cross-country boots are leather or leather and vinyl and should fit snugly like a tennis shoe. Boots should flex at the toe, but not from side to side; more expensive models have more flex.

Bindings cost around \$10 and are available in two styles, three-pin bindings and cable bindings. Three pin bindings are simpler, more popular, provide better hold and bind only at the toe. Cable bindings also hold at the heel. They bind loosely, allowing freedom of movement, but can be clamped down tight for downhill stretches. For this reason they are popular with mountaineers.

Unlike Alpine bindings there is no automatic release mechanism with cross-country skis. Because of the freedom of movement afforded with toe-only bindings, fallen skiers can right themselves without removing their skis.

Poles are available in fiberglass, aluminum and bamboo or Tonkin grass. Fiberglass poles are lighter and fairly indestructible, but also more expensive. Aluminum poles are a little stronger and can sometimes be bent back into shape if slightly battered. Tonkin grass or bamboo, however, is the preferred material for poles. These poles are strong yet more flexible than the other poles; bamboo poles have leather handles, fiberglass and aluminum have plastic handles.



When it comes to clothing, many cross-country skiers compare their sport with winter backpacking — they dress for comfort. Loose, wool clothing that breathes is preferred to nylon. Nordic skiers tend to dress in layers; the trapped air between layers helps keep them warm, and layers can be added to or removed to meet weather conditions.

It is a good idea to wear fishnet underwear — it will breathe and allow perspiration to escape.

Some cross-country skiers, however, will not go out without their ski knickers and \$20 wool sox. Fashion is as important as one makes it.

Since the skier is constantly moving, there is no need for bulky down jackets. The exercise helps provide heat.

The basic technique of cross-country skiing is the diagonal stride. Quite simply, as the skier kicks with his right foot he poles with his left hand. As the right ski glides forward he kicks with his left foot and poles with his right hand.

Double poling is a technique used particularly when travelling downhill. The skier bends over and uses his stomach muscles to drive the poles.

The basic turn is the step turn. Simply step in the direction you wish to turn and follow with the other leg.

The telemark turn involves leaning forward and into the direction of the turn. It is a good technique for moving downhill or traversing rough terrain.

There are three different ways to move uphill. If the hill slants gently upward, the diagonal stride will suffice. For slightly steeper inclines a skier "herring-bones" up the hill by placing his skis at a 45 degree angle to the direction he's moving, and walking. The skis will leave a herring bone pattern on the snow. For

severely steep hills the skier simply turns sideways and moves up one step at a time.

Stopping is accomplished by snowplowing. If the skier has to stop quickly, he simply falls down.

Bivouac offers free clinics to beginners on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Included in the clinic is one day's free equipment rental. Raupp Campfitters holds a free seminar on Saturday mornings.

Where's the best place to go cross-country skiing in the Ann Arbor area?

"I like Radrick Farms golf course out by the botanical gardens best," says Gary Koloff, an employee of Bivouac. "It has woods, trails through the woods and also open areas to learn on. It's not too crowded and they leave the gate open until five o'clock. You can drive right in." Gary also suggests Stinchfield Woods.

The Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission suggests Fuller recreation area, adjacent to the Fuller pool.

Other areas often mentioned by cross-country skiers are the Pinckney Recreation Area and Kensington Park.

Local areas most often mentioned by skiers include the Arboretum, Huron and Leslie golf courses, and out Huron River Drive.

—Bob Gwizdz



Leisure Notes

Twenty bookshops in one place? Yes, for one day only, Saturday, February 19, when the Midwest Antiquarian Booksellers Association will hold their fourth book fair and sale in the Anderson Room of the University of Michigan Student Union, 530 S. State St. in Ann Arbor. Time: 10:30 am to 7:00 pm. Admission is free.

You can see and buy a select group of literary first editions, fine leather bindings, illustrated books, Civil War books, old children's books among many others.

Roman portrait sculpture is remarkable for its realism and strong depiction of character. An exhibit at the Kelsey Museum of Ancient and Medieval Archaeology (the turreted stone building on State

Street) brings together 16 sculptures from 27 B.C. to 250 A.D. plus 18th and 19th century copies. Museum hours: MWF 9-11, 1-4; T-Th 11-4.

You may have too much leisure on your hands if you're unemployed. If you're a U-M graduate student or grad school graduate, you can sign up for a very useful conference on non-academic job hunting for graduate students February 9 from 3 to 9:30 and February 11 starting at 9:15 a.m. The second session features a "creative search strategy" including low-stress job-hunting, creating your own job, and non-traditional jobs. Write the U-M Extension Service, 412 Maynard, Ann Arbor 48109.

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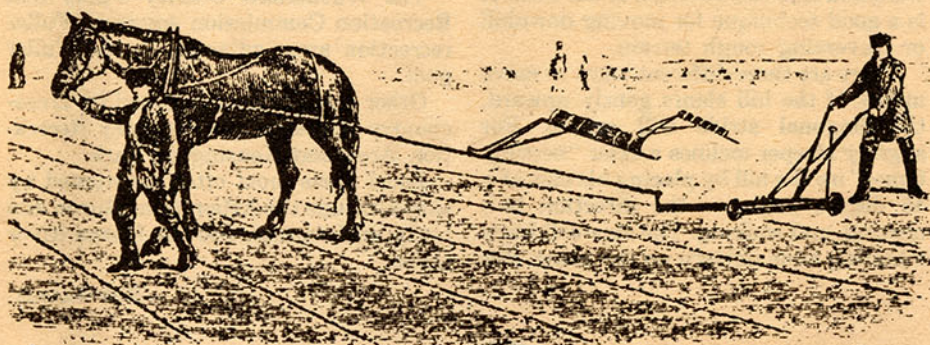
Detroit Street

Harvesting Ice: Once a Flourishing Winter Industry



1 To harvest natural ice, the first step was scraping away the accumulation of snow on the frozen surface.

Scribner's Monthly Magazine, 1875



2 Then a horse-drawn cutter scored the ice in neat rectangles for efficient storage. The first score was only three or four inches deep; the second score cut father in, leaving only four inches of ice uncut. Bars could then be pushed into the grooves to separate sections of ice and float them into a channel of water to the icehouse.

Back before World War One, the ice harvest would likely be winding up by this time of year in Ann Arbor and vicinity. After weeks of hard, cold work, ten hours a day, often seven days a week, the icehouses along the Huron River and by lakes and farmers' ponds would be filled with tons of ice. Sawn into blocks of up to 300 pounds, ice was stacked in tiers up to the top of the icehouses and insulated with sawdust and marsh hay to be kept into summer and fall.

In the northern third of the United States, natural ice was considered a major agricultural crop and remained one

until the 1920's. The size and quality of the crop depended on the weather, of course. During good winters the ice was clear and thick — as much as twenty inches deep. In the winter of 1919, though, the ice never formed properly and wasn't harvested until March. Then it was only four inches thick. When the ice came close to running out in summer, it had to be informally rationed, with preference given to homes with sick people and babies.

Most of Ann Arbor's supply of ice came from the Huron River. Traver Creek between Jones Drive (then Mill Street) and Plymouth Road was dammed to form a pond from which the old Ann Arbor Brewing Company on Mill Street cut its ice. When the brewery closed in 1908, its proprietor, Ernest Rehberg, went into the ice business. His daughter Olga (now Mrs. Grover Hauser) kept the books for Rehberg & Son ice dealers and remembers many details of the business.

As soon as the ice was nine or ten inches thick, she says, harvesting began. (See the steps described beneath the illustrations.) In order to fill their two big icehouses to the top, the men had to make two cuttings on the pond. So when the first formation of ice was removed, they had to wait for the new ice to form again. There was an element of judgment and risk involved in deciding when to cut: colder weather could bring thicker ice,

Icehouses were so well insulated (often with canvas at the doors to keep out the warm outside air) that by July little melting had occurred. You could knock off the sawdust and still see the saw marks on the ice block, according to Carroll Ordway. Amazingly enough, ice could be kept in icehouses for two or three years with only 25% shrinkage.

The iceman who delivered to homes and stores was a familiar figure in nineteenth and early twentieth century America, and his wagon was a welcome sight, nostalgically remembered by generations of children who followed it, begging for pieces of ice. We asked Mrs. Hauser if icemen tended to be beloved local characters like some mailmen and milkmen who worked the same routes for decades. To the contrary, she said. Turnover among icemen was high.

"It was hard work," she emphasized, "a strenuous job." Winter harvesting was extremely demanding, and during warmer weather, she said, her father's men "went to work at 5 AM to dig ice out of the ice house and cut it up into 25 or 50 pound chunks. Most of the home deliveries were just 25 pounds. But the wholesale deliveries were much harder work. The cakes weighed 50 to 100 pounds, and everything had to be lifted up to the top part of the refrigerator." Deliveries often lasted until 8 PM. For



3 Sawing was another method to cut loose the cakes of ice. Men used long hooked poles to guide the floating chunks into the ice-



Gleason's Drawing Room Companion, 1852

house. [Whiskey or hard cider sometimes made this hard, cold work more bearable.]

but a sudden warm spell could turn a bumper crop to mush.

When the icehouses were completely filled, men put marsh hay (bought from a farm in Northfield Township) over the piled-up blocks of ice to insulate it. The icehouses had double walls with nine inches of sawdust in between.

Sometimes sawdust was used between layers and cakes of ice so they wouldn't melt and stick together, but Mrs. Hauser states this was not the case with her father's ice, nor with that of the big Toledo Ice Company that harvested up on Whitmore Lake and sent ice to Toledo via the Ann Arbor Railroad. Ice cakes had to be chipped out with bars in summer, she says.

this the iceman earned from \$9 to \$12 a week (circa 1910). So they tended to move on to better jobs whenever they could.

Ann Arbor housewives paid ten or fifteen cents for a twenty-five pound cake of ice which kept an icebox cool for two or three days. Ice companies gave four-sided cards to put in the front window to indicate how many pounds of ice were desired — 25, 50, 75, or 100, depending on which numeral was up. Stores with big coolers ordered ice by the ton once a week, and saloons needed ice even in winter to refrigerate the draft beer on tap.

Ice dealers tended to get into the ice business as a sideline if they needed the ice for their principal line of work or if

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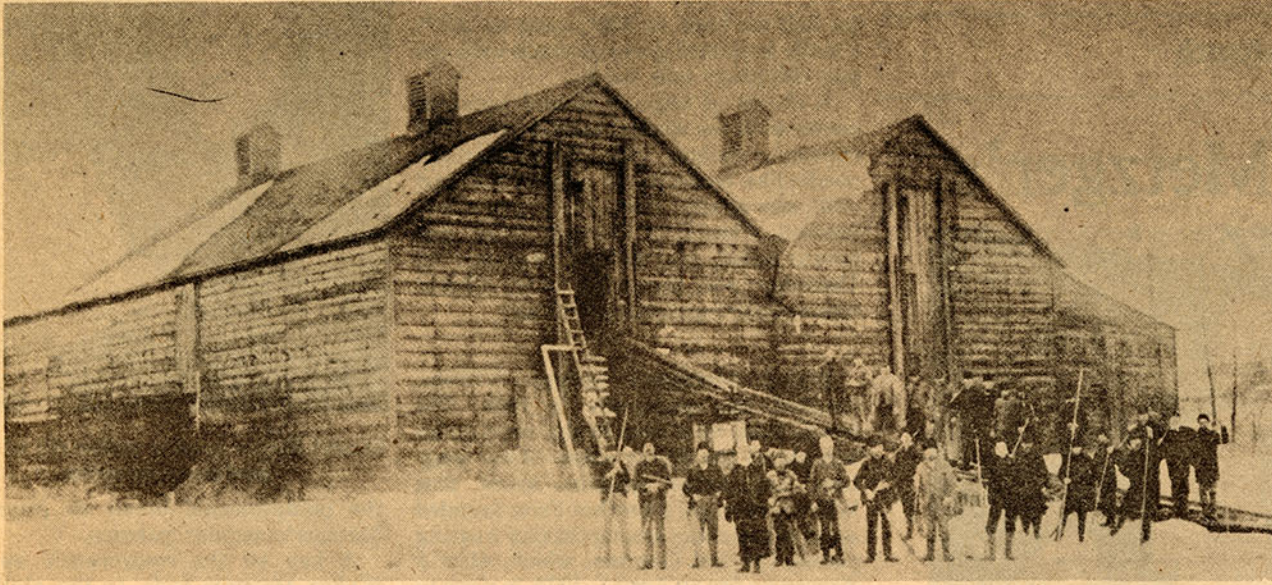
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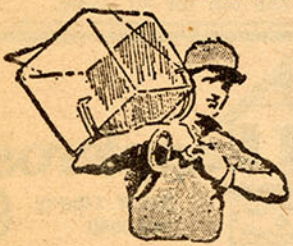


Sam Sturgis Collection

4

Ramps, sometimes with motor-driven endless chains and hooks, were used to raise ice chunks into the icehouses. This was the Hangsterfer icehouse

by Argo Pond on the Huron River. The long door allowed ice to be brought in at different levels as the icehouse became filled with tiers of ice.



Ice men had to be strong to carry 25, 50, or 100 pound ice blocks into the kitchen or store and hoist them into the upper compartment of the refrigerator.

they already had the horses and wagons required to deliver ice. As a brewer of lager beer, Ernest Rehberg had used ice in the racking room to coll the brew as it was poured from the brew vat into barrels for storage or lagering in a cool place.

For over thirty years, up until 1904, Ann Arbor's biggest ice dealer was E. V. Hangsterfer, also the town's leading confectioner and restaurateur of the time. He needed ice to make his ice cream and

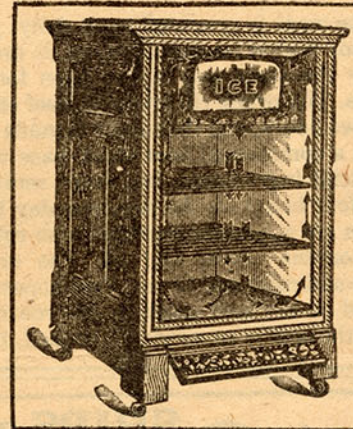
keep fruits and meat fresh for his restaurant and banquet rooms. After Hangsterfer left the business, the slack was taken up by Rehberg, grocer Tom Nickels (who later developed Nickels Arcade where his grocery store had been) and Guy Mullison who used horses from his livery stable and "riding academy" at 326 East Ann to deliver ice.

In 1910 there were six ice dealers in town; by 1920 there were only two major companies, and they made artificial ice, rather than using natural ice cut from local lakes and streams. Ernest Rehberg had for all practical purposes shut down operations in 1918 when his son Carl went away to war. When Carl returned, he went to work for the Artificial Ice Company at 416 W. Huron and eventually purchased the firm. It continued until 1962.

During the 1920's and 1930's manufacturers of refrigerators cooled by ice successfully improved their product. Many modern, smartly-styled iceboxes

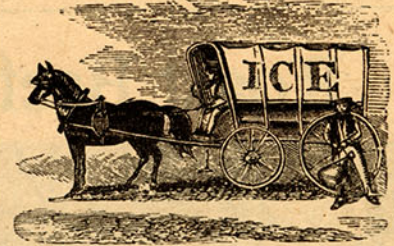
were successfully marketed in the 1930's, and in 1944 30% of American homes with refrigerators still had ones that used ice. But mechanical refrigeration was steadily winning out. The iceman made their rounds in Ann Arbor into the 1950's, but today the old-time icebox is relegated to the role of nostalgic curiosity in demand at country auctions and antique shops.

—MH



Sears Roebuck's ice-cooled refrigerators were made in Michigan. In 1902 a standard model like this one cost from \$7.84 to \$9.00, depending on size. Air, cooled by slowly melting ice, circulated to cool the entire chamber. As it passed over the ice, the air cooled and fell, pushing the warm air below up the flues on either end, so it too came into contact with the cold ice compartment.

The American Ice Story



The natural ice business was by and large an American phenomenon, just as refrigeration is far more widespread here than in Europe. In Europe the practice of shopping for groceries each day persists, and home refrigeration is not considered essential. Hot American summers and longer distances between farms, stockyards, and urban markets made refrigeration more important in this country. The basic technology for harvesting ice on a commercial scale was developed on ponds in Cambridge, Massachusetts in the 1820's by Nathaniel Wyeth. His employer was Frederic Tudor, the Boston Ice King, who exported ice to the southern United States, Caribbean, and the Far East.

Refrigeration by natural ice freed the American diet from dependence on meat preserved by salt, spices, and drying. It enabled the Chicago meat industry to ship fresh meat to East Coast cities. But Chicago's meat companies in turn hastened the use of mechanical refrigeration in order to overcome the disadvantages of natural ice (its cost, bulk, and varying availability depended on winter weather). Southern cities were relying on artificial ice manufactured in local plants as early as the 1890's. But in the northern third of the country, the natural ice industry persisted roughly until the end of World War One. Cold winters and abundant lakes and streams made natural ice a cheap and practical source of refrigeration for a century, though it should be pointed out that many families in town and country never had iceboxes at all. They simply used cellars and spring houses to keep food cool.

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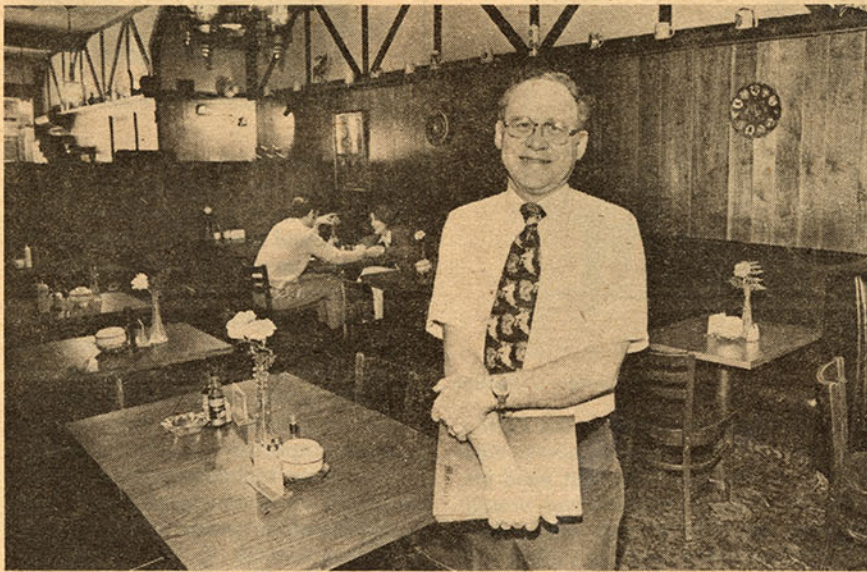
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Meal of the Month

Roast Beef at Metzger's



Dave Breen

Proprietor Walter Metzger. His family has owned and operated the restaurant nearly fifty years.

There is nothing timid about Cheryl Mayer's appreciation of the roast beef dinner at Metzger's German Restaurant, 203 East Washington. "Delicious, delightful, deliriously delectable" is how she began several paragraphs of exuberant praise for the prime rib with natural beef gravy, the spatzen, and all the other accompaniments to this standard feature at Ann Arbor's oldest restaurant. Cheryl is a medical technician at the U-M School of Public Health and also an amateur pilot.

The meat is prepared fresh daily, proprietor Walter Metzger told us, in essentially the same way it has been for 49 years. The prime rib cooks in beef stock for two hours, and that stock is made not from a commercial beef stock base with artificial ingredients, but from scratch. For four hours on the previous day beef bones are simmered together with celery and onions—skins and all. The onion skins add color and flavor. Veal bones are added to the beef stock in the roasting pan, the beef is covered and cooked, first

for half an hour at 500°, then at 375°. Finally a natural gravy is made with the pan drippings and stock.

A choice of vegetables and potatoes comes with the dinner: tossed salad, red cabbage, spatzen (the South German noodle-like specialty of eggs, flour and milk, served with gravy) and potatoes—mashed, French or German fried, hot potato salad, and potato pancakes on Thursday and Saturday only. Cheryl recommends spatzen and salad.

Walter Metzger's father, William, founded the restaurant in 1928. The family lived for a time in the same building, above the dining room. Many longtime Ann Arbor residents know that William Metzger's brother Fritz founded another mainstay among the city's eating places, the Old German, which, after a disastrous fire on April 1, 1975, is close to reopening under the continuing proprietorship of Bud Metzger, Fritz's son and Walter's first cousin. Other Metzger relatives who operated the Delux Bakery at Fourth and Washington until their retirement several years ago used to make



Cheryl Mayer selects prime rib of roast beef from the menu.

the pumpernickel bread so prized by Metzger's regular patrons.

A key to the restaurant's success, Walter Metzger feels, is the ability to retain friendly, capable employees. Among the corps of waitresses are veterans of 18 and 20 years, respectively.

Two of the five cooks have served for 18 years or longer, and one dishwasher has been on the job for 20 years. —JF

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New Lunch Menu

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The Salad Bowl

Maurice Salad Bowl	2.75
Julienne of Ham, Turkey, and Cheese on Garden Fresh Salad Greens	
Fresh Crabmeat and Shrimp Salad Bowl.....	3.95
With Tomato and Egg Wedges, Choice of Dressing	
Assorted Fresh Fruit Plate	3.25
With Cottage Cheese or Sherbet	
Tossed Green Salad.....	.75
Roquefort Dressing .30	
Fresh Tossed Spinach Salad Plate	2.25
With Bermuda Onions, Blue Cheese, Bacon Crumbs and Croutons, Choice of Dressings	

Luncheon Favorites

Luncheon Favorites Include Tossed Salad, Choice of Potato or Vegetable, Rolls and Butter

San Francisco Special	2.95
Ground Sirloin Beef Sauteed with Chopped Onions, Fresh Spinach, Parmesan Cheese, Egg and Seasonings	
London Broil on Garlic Toast	3.25
With Natural Gravy	
Campus Club Steak	4.25
Broiled to Suit Your Taste	
Wiener Schnitzels.....	3.25
With Sauteed Mushrooms	
Butter-Broiled Cape Cod Scallops	2.95
Served on Toast	